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SIPDIS

FOR EUR/WE, ALSO FOR PM/PPA AND IO/UNP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2018

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PBTS](#) [PHSA](#) [PTER](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: HORN OF AFRICA PIRACY: FORMATION OF CONTACT GROUP

REF: A. STATE 129941
[1](#)B. STATE 129528
[1](#)C. STATE 125514
[1](#)D. MADRID 1131

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION ARNOLD A. CHACON, REASONS 1.4(B)
, (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Polcouns delivered ref a demarche to Spanish MFA DG for Strategic Affairs and Terrorism Carmen Bujan December 12. Bujan said Spain, in principle, welcomed the formation of a contact group. She emphasized, as she and other GOS officials have in the past, that finding adequate judicial arrangements was a major challenge. Bujan has previously mentioned to us Spain's unwillingness to see captured pirates turned over to countries which might not be able to afford them due process. Bujan had a copy of the draft UNSC resolution (ref b) and expressed surprise over the provision relating to measures ashore. Polcouns noted that maritime efforts alone could not eliminate piracy, and the U.S. preferred to have both UNSC authorization and TFG permission for any action ashore. In any case, the key now was to get the contact group up and running, which Bujan agreed would be an important step forward.

[1](#)2. (C) As we have reported (e.g., ref d), Spain has been seized with the piracy issue since April 2008 when a Spanish fishing boat was taken (the boat and its crew were released, presumably after a ransom payment). MOD Chacon appeared before the Spanish Congress December 10 and noted that in September Spain had sent a military contingent (a P-3 patrol plane and supporting element) to Djibouti to operate against the pirates. She said the plane had made 57 sorties and flown 450 hours in anti-piracy missions (Chacon visited the unit in Djibouti in early November). She promised to return to congress at the beginning of the new year to seek support for sending additional forces to participate in the EU's Operation Atalanta. Chacon told congress November 25 that Spain planned to send a frigate at the beginning of 2009 and eventually an oiler (in addition to the P-3) to support Operation Atalanta. She also noted that a Spanish naval officer would in April 2009 rotate into the afloat commander role. The MOD's decision to lift the GOS self-imposed cap of 3,000 military personnel deployed in overseas missions (strongly hinted at for some time and announced by the MOD in congress December 10) is perhaps in part related to the plans to send these additional assets to Operation Atalanta.
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